

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (-)-Benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide.
2. A therapeutic composition comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide, in association with a physiologically acceptable excipient.
3. A method for the treatment of hypersomnia, which comprises administering, to a patient in need of such a treatment, a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide as an arousing agent.
4. A method for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, which comprises administering, to a patient in need of such a treatment, a pharmaceutically effective amount of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide as a CNS stimulant.
5. A method for the preparation of (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetamide, which comprises:
  - 1°) reacting ( $\pm$ )-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid with (-)- $\alpha$ -methylbenzylamine to give the (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate of (-)- $\alpha$ -methylbenzylamine,
  - 2°) converting the resulting (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate salt of (-)- $\alpha$ -methylbenzylamine to (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid by acid hydrolysis, and
  - 3°) subjecting the resulting (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid to an amidation reaction with  $\text{NH}_3$ .
6. The method according to claim 5, wherein stage 3°) is carried out in two steps, namely:
  - 3a) esterification of the (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetic acid to a  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_3$  lower alkyl (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate, followed by
  - 3b) transamidation of the resulting  $\text{C}_1$ - $\text{C}_3$  lower alkyl (-)-benzhydrylsulfinylacetate with  $\text{NH}_3$ .
7. The method according to claim 5 or 6, wherein:
  - in stage 1°), the reaction is carried out in the presence of an excess of amine relative to the stoichiometric conditions, with a molar ratio amine/acid of between 1.02/1 and 1.15/1,

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- in stage 2°), the said acid hydrolysis is carried out at a temperature of between 30 and 45°C,
- in step 3a), the said esterification reaction is carried out so as to give a C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub> lower alkyl ester selected from the group comprising the isopropyl, ethyl and methyl esters, and
- in step 3b), the said transamidation reaction is carried out with a stream of NH<sub>3</sub> gas.